

George Washington to Bryan Fairfax, December 12, 1770, Reply to Bryan Fairfax's Letter of December 6, 1770, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor.

***To BRYAN FAIRFAX**

December 12 1770.

D Sir: Having received your favour of the 6th.¹ I profess myself at a loss to know what answer to give to it, and to consult a Lawyer every time we are puzzled by the duplicity of Mrs. Savages' Conduct woud sink a large portion of her Annuity, or entail a heavy expence upon ourselves.

I think as you do, that it would seem odd to refuse an actual tender of Mrs. Savage's Annuity from the Doctrs. Agent at a time when we are threat'ning his Security with a Suit on this Acct. And I am of opinion, that if we do receive the money from him, we can not legally withhold payment thereof from her Attorney (who is one and the same person) without submitting our Reasons for so doing to the Publick attention and her Letters she has expressly requird may not be seen. Without exposing these as the ground of our refusal [we] can have no pretext to detain the money in our hands; to keep it there woud contribute nothing to the relief of Mrs. Savages's necessities but very probably expose ourselves to Censure. And to pay the money to any Person not legally autoriz'd to receive it woud I believe be equally Imprudent. In short, view the matter in whatever light one will there is nothing but doubts and difficulties before us; and I see no effectual method of serving Mrs. Savage without falling into some snare which we may not easily extricate

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ourselves from for I must confess that I have no good opinion of Mrs. Savages honour on the one hand. On the [other] our attempts to serve her will give us little to expect from the Doctors Friendship if we should drop into a faux pas. Upon the whole, can we, do you think, avoid coming to a Settlement with Mr. Montgomerie without Incurring the Imputation of disengenuity on the one hand; or being too plain in our Reason's for it on the other; If this can be done, I should be for letting that matter sleep till we could write a joint Letter to Mrs. Savage informing her of the predicament in which her Affairs respecting the Bond stands and to beg that she will [mutilated] and fixd to some point or no longer expect us to become the dupes of her fickleness and folly; if you think this method can be adopted no time should be lost in putting it in execution, if you think it cannot or ought not I am willing to pursue any other you shall advise as I own that I am more per [plexed the] more I think of the matter. I am Sir, etc.

¹In the earlier correspondence the manuscripts identify George William Fairfax with the trusteeship of Mrs. Savage.